

REMARKS

Claims 31-40, 42-43 and 45-47 are pending in this application. In this Response, Applicants have amended certain claims because Applicants believe these amendments serve a useful clarification purpose, and are desirable for clarification purposes, independent of patentability. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the claim amendments do not limit the range of any permissible equivalents.

In particular, independent claim 43 has been rewritten to include the subject matter previously recited in claim 44. Accordingly, claim 44 has been canceled. As no new matter has been added by the amendments herein, Applicants respectfully request entry of these amendments at this time.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's allowance of claims 31-40 and 42. In addition, Applicants appreciate the Examiner's recognition of allowable subject matter in claim 44. In response, Applicants have rewritten claim 43 to include the subject matter indicated to be allowable.

THE REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 43 and 45 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over U.S. Patent No. 5,895,105 to Nesbitt for the reasons provided on page 2 of the Office Action. In addition, claims 43 and 45 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Japanese Patent Publication No. 6091019 as provided on page 2 of the Office Action. The Examiner also rejected claim 43 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Japanese Patent Publication No. 57037459 as set forth on page 2 of the Office Action. Finally, claims 43 and 45-47 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Hebert '172 in view of Japanese Patent Publication No. 6091019 or Japanese Patent Publication No. 57037459 for the reasons set forth on pages 2-3 of the Office Action.

In light of the amendments herein, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejections are overcome. As such, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the §§ 102 and 103 rejections.

CONCLUSION

All claims are believed to be in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes that the present amendments still do not resolve all of the issues regarding patentability of the pending claims, Applicants invite the Examiner to contact the undersigned attorneys to discuss any remaining issues.

No fees are believed to be due for this amendment. Should any fee be required, however, please charge such fee to Swidler Berlin LLP Deposit Account No. 195127, Order No. 20002.0381.

Respectfully submitted,
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